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Artists of Abraham Lincoln portraits

Ron Sanders

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

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RON SANDERS PAINTING DONE AT TLM 8/1990

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To Preserve the Union

Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

Not since Gutzon Borglum blasted away at Mount Rushmore has an artist actually created a Lincoln portrait in public. In 1999, artist Ron Sanders (b. 1966) set up his easel in an exhibition of period paintings at the Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and working six hours a day for a month, completed *To Preserve the Union*. It was auctioned off for $6,000 on October 16, 1999. Sanders's debt to symbol-laden nineteenth-century portraiture is apparent: a sword hangs above Lincoln's desk, representing war, and a broken manacle lies at his feet, symbolizing emancipation. Lincoln clutches the Proclamation in his right hand, and it is bathed by sunlight from the doors behind him, outside of which, winter notwithstanding, the trees are green, suggesting a renewal of national life. Sanders's boldest treatment was draping Lincoln in the American flag, and placing the stars representing the states firmly in his grasp. Though the parquet floorboard planks are crossed, symbolizing rebellion, Sanders's Lincoln will not let go. Asked if he was saying something new with this work, the artist replied: "A am much more interested in saying something true."

Harold Holzer and Gabor Boritt
"Lincoln in 'Modern Art'" in
THE LINCOLN ENIGMA
ed. Gabor Boritt
(Oxford University Press, 2001)

Original oil painting © Ron Sanders 1999
www.sanders-studios.com
note card © John Tippmann, Sr. 2001

Spanish Key

Drawing 19-

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